

REMARKS

By this paper, independent claim 1 has been amended and claims 8-23 have been canceled. Claims 1-7 are pending.

In the outstanding Office action dated June 28, 2006, claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Rhodes (5,665,117). Pending claims 4-7 were withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner.

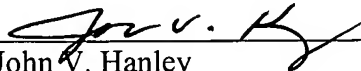
Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 as amended as well as its dependent claims recite subject matter which is patentable over the cited Rhodes reference. In particular, Rhodes does not teach a graft including a sealing member including a free end unconnected to a tubular member as well as a biasing member connected to the sealing member and biasing the free end of the sealing member away from the tubular member. Accordingly, it is believed that each of independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-7 define patentable subject matter.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have attempted to completely respond to the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office action. In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the application be reconsidered, the claims allowed and the application passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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